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Deputy Mick Wallace,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 11089/19

To ask the Minister for Health the number of paediatric occupational therapist vacancies in each county; and the steps he is taking to reduce waiting lists

-Mick Wallace

Dear Deputy Wallace

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for response.

There have been a number of challenges facing our Health Services in recent years, unprecedented financial austerity coupled with an increase in service use has resulted in a strain on service provision. Allied health professions also have a predominantly female workforce, therefore are subject to high levels of maternity and parental leave. This can often increase the number of vacant posts in these areas.

The HSE is continuously working to overcome these challenges and we have seen a reduction in waiting lists between 2018 and 2019 which we plan to build on into the future. Our data indicates that 356,716 patients were seen for occupational therapy services in 2018.

This is largely due to the substantial work and effort made by staff and the steps they have taken to alleviate pressure on waiting lists. Examples of such steps include the use of prioritisation systems to ensure that patients with the highest level of need are seen as quickly as possible, running group sessions where appropriate to increase the number of patients seen per session. Services are commonly offering home packages for caregivers to work on during the waiting period. Drop in clinics have been set up to support people currently on waiting lists. School based workshops have also been run to consult with teachers and special needs assistants on measures to address the needs of sensory processing, fine motor difficulties or coordination skills. This has benefits not only in alleviating waiting lists but also in ensuring children are getting global input to address difficulties.


The table below outlines the number of vacancies per Community Healthcare Organisation.

Table 1: Number of Paediatric Occupational Therapist Vacancies per CHO

Area:	Number of Paediatric Occupational Therapist Vacancies in each County	Comments
CHO1	1	N/A
CHO2	5	N/A
CHO3	0	N/A
CHO4	2	Both vacancies are at an advanced stage of recruitment and will be filled shortly.
CHO5	3	N/A
CHO6	0	N/A
CHO7	12	N/A
CHO8	1	There is currently 1 WTE paediatric vacancy in CHO 8 – Midlands/Louth/Meath. This paediatric vacancy has been prioritised for approval to backfill by the Primary Care Management Team.
CHO9	5	There are currently 3 permanent vacancies in OT Paediatrics service, we have start dates for 2 in April 2019 and we are awaiting a start date from HBS Recruit for other permanent post. In addition, there are two maternity leave locum vacancies which have been approved to fill and we are in the process of trying to fill these posts at the moment.
Total	29	

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



David Walsh,
National Director,
Community Operations